

## Dismantling Bias Conference Series

---

# Pathways to integrate marginalized populations into the workplaces

Ellie Okada

*Boston Cancer Policy Institute/ Harvard Library, [ellieokada@cancerpolicyinstitute.org](mailto:ellieokada@cancerpolicyinstitute.org)*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/cgg>



Part of the [Communication Commons](#), [Human Resources Management Commons](#), [Organizational Behavior and Theory Commons](#), [Political Science Commons](#), [Psychology Commons](#), and the [Sociology Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Okada, Ellie (2022) "Pathways to integrate marginalized populations into the workplaces," Dismantling Bias Conference Series: Vol. 3 : Iss. 4, Article 3. Abstract of a paper presented at the Dismantling Bias event, organized by E. E. Kossek & T. J. Merriweather. Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN. Available at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/cgg/vol3/iss4/3>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact [epubs@purdue.edu](mailto:epubs@purdue.edu) for additional information.

## **Pathways to integrate marginalized populations into the workplaces**

### **Introduction**

Exposure to specific contexts affects people's decision-making processes. Based on Trope and Liberman's (2010) construal level theory, poverty affects peoples' time-preference and mental bandwidth (Sheehy-Skeffington & Rea, 2017). People exposed to long-term poverty have traits characterized as proximity as follows: (a) A short-term time preference (focusing on the present as opposed to the future) and (b) a narrow mental bandwidth (focusing on the actual as opposed to the hypothetical; those socially close as opposed to those socially distant; here as opposed to places far away). These characters derive not from their inertia or immature thinking but their adaptation behaviors (Sheehy-Skeffington & Rea, 2017).

In a workplace, discrimination further causes marginalized people to lose their self-efficacy. As Sue, Alsaidi, Awad, Glaeser, Calle, and Mendez (2019) state, the (long-term) experiences of discrimination can lose their ability to respond (to harassment) that leads them to have negative self-evaluation, feelings of hopelessness, and belief that discrimination must be accepted (Sue et al., 2019; Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000). If this condition lasts long, the target will further develop anxiety, resign a job, and even leave the job market. Thus, reinforced poverty persists.

Then, a question arises on how to integrate a marginalized population into formal economic activities. Economic policy literature has prioritized entrepreneurship due to the potential variety, thus job creation effects (OECD, 2000). However, several articles point out that traditional entrepreneurship components do not necessarily work in deeply disadvantaged populations of various social and cultural backgrounds. Further, workplace literature reveals that, according to a survey, more than seventy percent of hiring managers with color showed their reluctance to hiring people with color, ascribing it to the lack of social skill.

Previous studies also note, "many impoverished people, living in racially segregated neighborhoods, express adherence to mainstream American culture: hard work, family loyalties, and individual achievement are part of their cultural repertory. Nevertheless, the translation of values into action is shaped by the tangible milieu that encircles them" (Kelly, 1994; Teitz & Chapple, 1998).

Then their relations with the "tangible milieu that encircles them" should be addressed in the process of empowering them.

Based on the above, this study investigates the following research question: What components help to empower marginalized population and reverse their decision-making patterns to integrate them into workplaces. The motivation is to empower such a population, help to change their thinking pattern, and rebuild a good self-image that can resist external bias (Sue et al., 2017). The methodology is conceptual framing by observing rail-yard residents who live in a location with pollutants.

This study contributes to the literature by enhancing Sue et al. (2017)'s intervention pathways by integrating the decision-making pattern of people exposed to poverty.

This study organizes the section as follows. First, it describes the thinking pattern of people who lived in long-term poverty. Then, it addresses pathways to modify the bias that they acquired during the adaptation process. The final section concludes.

## **Background**

Rail transportation benefits society by transporting consumer goods, hazardous materials, and specialties (Spencer-Hwang, Montgomery, Dougherty, Valladares, Rangel, Gleason, & Soret, 2014). However, it also negatively affects disadvantaged populations who live near rail-yard areas. Negative influences include health issues linked to airborne pollutant exposure, such as respiratory illnesses, heart disease, cancer risk, effects on immune system, and neurotoxicity, among others (Spencer-Hwang *et al.*, 2014). The physical dis-functioning places barriers to obtaining job opportunities. In addition, the poverty definition often entails, in low-income areas in rich countries, doing without desirable goods seen as critical to full participation in society (Goulden & D'Arcy, 2014; Sheehy-Skeffington & Rea, 2017), which leads them to have a sense of social exclusion (Gordon *et al.*, 2000).

Poverty can be inherited from the generation. Exposure to poverty while young is associated with poorer functioning on tasks measuring basic cognitive process, such as selective attention and inhibitory control. Socio-economic status also correlates with higher-level thinking processes such as reasoning and learning (Sheehy-Skeffington & Rea, 2017). Contrary, a specific social program provided housing and education to incarcerated adolescents and converted them to high-skilled workers, including a neurosurgeon and a court judge.

Therefore, proper interventions can integrate them into workplace activities while resisting discrimination.

## **Possible interventions**

The empowerment of the discriminated targets and the marginalized population is essential through the educational and actionable approach (Sue *et al.*, 2017). Sue *et al.* (2017) proposed micro-intervention strategies to empower discriminated targets in office places.

This study enhances intervention pathways by integrating the decision-making pattern of people exposed to poverty.